



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

February 13, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. John H. Austin, Chief
Performance Assessment and HLW Integration Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards

FROM: William L. Belke, Sr. On-Site Licensing
Representative for Quality Assurance and
Engineered Systems *Belke 2/13/97*

Chad J. Glenn, Sr. On-Site Licensing
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SUBJECT: U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ON-SITE
LICENSING REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT ON YUCCA
MOUNTAIN PROJECT FOR DECEMBER 1996 AND JANUARY
1997

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission On-Site Representative's (OR's) report for the period of December 1-31, 1996, and January 1-31, 1997.

The principal purpose of the OR reports is to alert NRC staff, managers and contractors to information on U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) programs for site characterization, repository design, performance assessment, and environmental studies that may be of use in fulfilling NRC's role during pre-licensing consultation. The principal focus of this and future OR reports will be on DOE's programs for the Exploratory Studies Facility (ESF), surface-based testing, performance assessment, data management systems and environmental studies. Relevant information includes new technical data, DOE's plans and schedules, and the status of activities to pursue site suitability and ESF development. In addition to communication of this information, any potential licensing concerns, or opinions raised in this report represent the views of the ORs and not that of NRC headquarters' staff.

Due to the holiday season and vacation schedules, for reporting purposes, this report will be a combined report for the months of December 1996, and January 1997. The ORs attended a series of important meetings namely, the NRC/DOE Quality Assurance meeting on December 5, 1996, and the Public Hearing Meeting held at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 23, 1997, for DOE to receive comments on proposed rulemaking to revise and amend the requirements of Part 960 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The ORs also attended the January 28-29, 1997, Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board meeting held in Pahrump.

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Nevada. The ORs have provided a recommendation on how to possibly enhance the communication process between NRC, DOE, NWTRB, and other affected parties by balancing the NWTRB agenda to facilitate all views being presented on a particular issue.

The applicability of Part 21 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations to the pre-licensing phase of the potential geologic repository for high-level nuclear waste has been questioned by DOE and an inquiry from DOE to NRC is being prepared for a written interpretation.

The excavation progress of the ESF tunnel boring operation advanced at a very reduced rate due to encountering extremely blocky ground during late December 1996, and January 1997.

If you have any questions on this report or its enclosures, please call William L. Belke or Chad J. Glenn on (702) 388-6125.

cc w/enclosures as stated:

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